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## The Great British Bake Off!

Posted on [September 13, 2010](#) | [1 Comment](#)

Thanks to the BBC, I have been keen to start baking again. If you haven't seen the show, it's a contest between several home bakers to produce amazingly high quality cakes, breads, pastries, puddings and pies to win the six week competition. Peppered throughout this reality show are tidbits of history around the food for the week.

Contestants bring their own recipes with them, but are also judged in a technical round, where everyone is given the same recipes and left on their own to figure out the method.

The show is surprisingly tense! There is no room for error, and the judges are incredibly strict.

Have you seen it? If not, you should watch it! We're already down to the last two episodes, so quick, get in there!

Posted in [Uncategorized](#)

→ **1 Comment**

## Where I've Been

Posted on [July 26, 2009](#) | [1 Comment](#)

This blog has been inactive for an embarassingly long time. Partly, this is due to the nature of the theme — after 30 days, what else was I gonna do? Also, I've been working on other writing projects, and would like to share my most recent one with my 30 Cakes readers (if any of you are still around, that is!).

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I am privileged to be a part of the [dinnercraft.com](http://dinnercraft.com) team, and I think it's a great site with lots of varied, interesting articles. It's growing all the time, so keep it bookmarked!

I'm sorry to say that I haven't done much baking in recent months, but this blog is always at the back of my mind and I hope to try new recipes soon. Don't give up hope! In the meantime, there are some awesome recipes at dinnercraft, so enjoy!

Posted in [Updates](#)

→ **1 Comment**

Tagged [baking](#), [blog](#), [cake](#), [dinnercraft](#)

## The best frosting I've made so far.

Posted on [December 14, 2008](#) | [3 Comments](#)

I am not a big frosting or icing person. If you have read through this blog before, you'll notice that most of my cakes go without it, because I think that it takes away from the flavour of the cake. Frostings are just too sweet for me, but when it comes to making sugar cookies for Christmas, I have to use it!

The trouble I've found is that most buttercream frostings I've made are too soft. I can never get them stiff enough without adding lots and lots of icing sugar, thus making them too sweet and inedible. Also, I like my white frosting to be white, not this off-white, buttery yellow colour that doesn't take food colouring very well.

Happily, I came across a recipe in a gingerbread house kit that I bought. It's terribly simple and super easy to make, and I will use it from now on whenever I need to make frosting.

### ***The Recipe***

*1 egg white*

*A box of icing sugar*

*Method*

*1. Whip the egg white until soft peaks form.*

*2. Add icing sugar, a little bit at a time, until desired consistency is reached. The icing will harden when left to dry, and will also get shiny.*

- [Dessert Obsessed](#)
- [Foodaphilia](#)
- [Gigi Cakes](#)
- [Home Ec 101](#)
- [Homebaking Association](#)
- [My Baking Adventures](#)
- [Shelves In My Mind](#)
- [Simply Recipes](#)
- [Sticky, Goopy, Creamy, Chewy](#)
- [The Gallery of Regrettable Food](#)
- [The Girl Who Ate Everything](#)
- [The Paupered Chef](#)
- [The Recipe Girl](#)
- [The Science of Cooking](#)
- [Visions of Sugarplum](#)
- [Way more than 52 Cupcakes](#)

3. *That's it!*

### ***My Alterations***

When I first used this recipe to make icing for our gingerbread house adventure, I made it very thick. Probably a bit too thick, because it started hardening while still inside the piping bags! Oops. I learned my lesson, though, because when I made it for my [Christmas sugar cookies](#), I made it much softer and it was easier to spread. The icing still hardened as it dried, but it took a lot longer.

### ***The Result***

This icing is very easy to make and use. I added lots of different colours to it for my kids to decorate their cookies, and it worked very well. Even though the icing was watered down a bit because of the colouring, it still dried after a few hours so I could wrap them up.

### ***The Verdict***

This recipe will be a staple in my baking arsenal. It's easy to remember, too, which is such a bonus. I like the sort of recipes where you can adjust them to your needs so easily.

### ***The Rating***

5/5, definitely. See how pretty my cookies looked?



Posted in [Baking Tips](#), [Basics of Baking](#), [Easy Baking](#), [Five Star](#), [Needs frosting](#), [Special Occasion Baking](#) → **3 Comments**  
Tagged [Christmas baking](#), [Christmas cookies](#), [easy](#), [Easy Baking](#), [eggs](#), [Five Star](#), [Frosting](#), [fun](#), [icing](#)

# Cookie-cutter Cookies: some Christmas baking!

Posted on [December 14, 2008](#) | [1 Comment](#)

**This image or  
video has been  
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I got this recipe from a friend; thanks, Cab!

## ***The Recipe***

*1 cup softened butter*

*1 cup sugar*

*1 egg*

*1 tsp vanilla*

*2 tsp baking powder*

*3 cups flour*

## ***Method***

- 1. Preheat oven to 400F/200C.*
- 2. Cream butter and sugar.*
- 3. Beat in egg and vanilla.*
- 4. Add baking powder and flour, one cup at a time. Mix well.*
- 5. Do not chill. Roll out to 1/8" thick and cut out.*
- 6. Bake for 6-8 minutes, or until brown around the edges.*

## ***My Alterations***

This was a new recipe for me, and since it was so simple anyway, I followed it pretty much exactly. The fact that I didn't have to chill the dough made me very excited to try it!

Oh, one alteration I did make was to add some food colouring to the dough for my kids. I broke the dough into fourths, and coloured one part red and one part green. That changed the consistency of the dough a bit, but the kids enjoyed themselves. My daughter still has red food colouring on her hands, though, which looks a bit gruesome!

## ***The Result***

I love this recipe so much. It's easy to throw together, and the dough rolls out beautifully. It isn't sticky, which is a problem I have with other sugar cookie recipes, and I didn't have to add any extra flour at all. I rolled the dough out on large chopping boards without having to add any extra flour to the board, either.

The cookies kept their shape when baking and weren't brittle. My kids didn't break any of them [when decorating](#); a definite point in their favour! They have a great taste, as well.

## ***The Verdict***

I love this recipe! I don't normally like baking cookies, because even though the end product is delicious, it takes a really long time to bake all the dough. This was so much fun, though! The dough was so easy to work with, and I think that made all the difference.

I baked and decorated several cookies to give as gifts to our family friends, and I've already received feedback about how good they taste. The cookies are soft, but not too chewy, and don't just taste sugary. I can't recommend this recipe enough!

## ***The Rating***

Definitely, definitely 5/5. I'm baking some more cookies right now, actually!

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video has been  
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Posted in [American Recipes](#), [Biscuits](#), [Cookies](#), [Five Star](#)

→ **1 Comment**

Tagged [baking](#), [Christmas baking](#), [Christmas cookies](#), [Christmas recipe](#), [Cookies](#), [delicious](#), [easy](#), [Easy Baking](#), [Five Star](#)

## Guest Blogger: Anna's Raspberry Buns

Posted on [August 19, 2008](#) | [9 Comments](#)

***Anna, over at [beepbeepdesigns](#), has kindly baked us some raspberry buns! Thanks for all your hard work!***

This recipe is from my mother-in-law. Raspberry buns are not really cakes, but are more like scones. They are more efficient than scones, though, because the jam is already inside! Perfect for picnics and teatime and whenever you feel a bit peckish.

Ingredients:





240g/8.5oz plain flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
90g/3oz margarine  
90g/3oz caster sugar  
1 lemon  
1 egg  
some milk  
raspberry jam  
Instructions:

Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper. Preheat your oven to 200C or [foreign equivalent](#).

Sift the flour and baking powder into a big bowl.



Wash your hands well, then rub the margarine into the flour until it looks like breadcrumbs. Then wash your hands again. A nailbrush might be helpful.



Zest the lemon. I hate this part. I use the side of a box cheese grater and all the rind gets stuck and I have to scrape it off with my fingers. But you should end up with this:



And then you can wash your hands again.

Add the sugar and lemon rind to the bowl and mix in. Add the egg — I like to live dangerously so I always crack it straight into the bowl, but you might want to crack it into a cup and then pour it into the bowl after checking for eggshell.

Mix in the egg, and enough milk to make a soft dough. You don't need very much milk; I always add too much and have to put in extra flour. You don't want it to be sticky, just soft and maybe looking like this:



Now for the complicated bit! But don't worry, it isn't very complicated.

And if you get it wrong it doesn't matter because it's only baking.

Prepare yourself with a floured board, an open jar of jam with a teaspoon, some milk in a cup with a pastry brush (you might not need this if your dough is too sticky like mine), and your lined baking tray. If you didn't line your baking tray at the start, now is a good time to do it.





(the baking tray is over to my right, please ignore cheese grater and nude lemon)

Make a ball of dough about 3cm across, and squash it flat on the floured board.



Put a little bit of jam (not too much! Don't be tempted to make them extra-jammy, unless you like scrubbing jam off the bottom of your oven. About half a teaspoon is plenty) in the centre of the circle.



Pinch the edges of the circle upwards to cover the jam. If your dough is not sticky enough, brush some milk on the edges to make them stick together.



Then in one swift movement, flip the whole thing upside-down and dump it on the baking tray.



Once you have done a trayful, sprinkle them with caster sugar. Also you might need to wash your hands.



Then put them in the oven for 18-20 minutes, or until they're just starting to go brown and are just a bit hard on top. Then put your new buns on a rack to cool.



Mmm, raspberry buns.

A note of caution though — like scones, these are especially delicious while still war. But biting hot jam is.... unpleasant. So let them cool down for a few minutes even if you have to sit on your hands at the other end of the house. Then tuck in!

***These look great, Anna. I'm sure I'll try them myself soon enough...***

Posted in [English Recipes](#), [Guest Blogger](#)

**→ 9 Comments**

Tagged [anna is awesome](#), [Guest Blogger](#), [raspberry buns](#), [scone-like](#)

## Ginger Biscuits

Posted on [July 24, 2008](#) | [1 Comment](#)



I made these for my husband, because ginger biscuits are his favourite. Since we have [plenty of ginger](#) in the cupboard now, I didn't have to buy anything special for the recipe. The recipe is from a hand-written booklet produced by a local church that I bought for 25p. Three cheers for granny recipes!

## ***The Recipe***

*4 oz margarine*

*1 Tbs Golden Syrup*

*pinch of baking soda*

*1 tsp ground ginger*

*3 oz sugar*

*6 oz self-raising flour*

### ***Method***

*Grease 1 or 2 baking trays and set oven to Gas 4 (that would be 180C/350F). Melt together the syrup and margarine, then stir in the rest of the sifted ingredients. With wet hands (keep a bowl of water on the table) roll into balls the size of a large marble and place wide apart on the baking trays (they spread). Cook for about 15 minutes or until done.*

### ***My Alterations***

Well, I didn't have any self-raising flour, so I took a really lazy short cut and just upped the baking soda to a full teaspoon. It seems to have worked. I kept everything else the same; Americans can use corn syrup or light treacle, if you can get it. The taste won't be exactly the same, but it will work just fine.

I didn't sift the ingredients because again: lazy. The whole wet hands thing didn't seem to matter much, but my fingers got a little bit sticky.

### ***The Result***

I mis-read the recipe a bit, and rolled the dough into small marble-sized balls rather than large ones, so I ended up with a ton of itsy bitsy biscuits. They were cute, though, and they cooked faster than 15 minutes; more like 8 or 9 minutes.

They came out lovely. I let them cool for a few minutes on the tray, so they were a bit crisp. Be careful not to overcook them, especially if you make them small.

## ***The Verdict***

These were great! They had just the right amount of gingery taste, and the texture was very similar to my husband's favourite store-bought brand. My kids adored them and we all happily munched on them for our dessert. The recipe was easy to follow, and the biscuits were very attractive when baked. I love their cracked tops.

## ***The Rating***

5/5

Not only were they cute and bite-sized, they were very tasty. The recipe was easy, and I liked the fact that my adjustment of throwing in a bit of extra baking soda didn't ruin anything. We'll definitely be making these again!



Posted in [Biscuits](#), [Cookies](#), [English Recipes](#), [Five Star](#) → **1 Comment**

Tagged [5 stars](#), [Biscuits](#), [british recipe](#), [Cookies](#), [easy](#), [tasty](#)

## **Thick and Chewy Chocolate Chip Cookies**

Posted on [July 7, 2008](#) | [11 Comments](#)



After taking a break from baking for a few days, I was in the mood for cookies. Not to be [confused](#) with [biscuits](#), cookies are large and (ideally) a bit chewy. The best





place to look for a decent chocolate chip cookie recipe is,

of course, Cookie Madness. In the end, I used a recipe that was posted by one of her readers in the [comments section](#).

Thanks for posting it, Heidi!



### ***The Recipe***

*These truly chewy chocolate chip cookies are delicious served warm from the oven or cooled. To ensure a chewy texture, leave the cookies on the cookie sheet to cool. You can substitute white, milk chocolate, or peanut butter chips for the semi- or bittersweet chips called for in the recipe. In addition to chips, you can flavor the dough with one cup of nuts, raisins, or shredded coconut.*

*Makes 1-1/2 dozen 3-inch cookies*

*2-1/8 cups bleached all-purpose flour (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)*

*1/2 teaspoon table salt*

*1/2 teaspoon baking soda*

*12 tablespoons unsalted butter (1-1/2 sticks), melted and cooled slightly*

*1 cup brown sugar*

*1/2 cup granulated sugar*

*1 large egg*

*1 large egg yolk*

*2 teaspoons vanilla extract*

*2 cups chocolate chips or chunks (semi or bittersweet)*

*1. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Adjust oven racks to upper- and lower-middle positions. Mix flour, salt, and baking soda together in medium bowl; set aside.*

*2. Either by hand or with electric mixer, mix butter and sugars until thoroughly blended. Mix in egg, yolk, and vanilla. Add dry ingredients; mix until just combined. Stir in chips.*

*3. Form scant 1/4 cup dough into ball. Holding dough ball using fingertips of both hands, pull into two equal halves. Rotate halves*

ninety degrees and, with jagged surfaces exposed, join halves together at their base, again forming a single cookie, being careful not to smooth dough uneven surface. Place formed dough onto one of two parchment paper-lined 20-by-14-inch lipless cookie sheets, about nine dough balls per sheet. Smaller cookie sheets can be used, but fewer cookies can be baked at one time and baking time may need to be adjusted. (Dough can be refrigerated up to 2 days or frozen up to 1 month)

### **My Alterations**

I used all the same amounts as listed for each ingredient, and added dark chocolate chips for the cookies themselves. I then halved the dough, adding a handful of coconut and white chocolate chips to one half of the dough, and leaving the other half as-is. The pictures above show the plain chocolate chip cookies on the left and the coconut, dark & white chocolate chip cookies on the right.

I did not do the formed dough thing to the cookies, partly because I couldn't be bothered, and partly because the dough didn't turn out the way I expected.

### **The Results**

The dough was surprisingly soft and sticky. Perhaps it needed to be chilled before trying the formed dough thing in step 3, but I don't know. I'm not a big cookie maker, so I've never heard of this method before. I always just scoop, dump and bake.

I made the cookies a bit larger than called for in the recipe, and they took about 10-12 minutes to bake at 180C (which was probably a bit too low). I let them cool on the pan, mostly, until I needed it again for the next batch. I made 12 coconut cookies and 6 regular ones, and froze the rest of the dough for another day.

### **The Verdict**

These cookies are brilliant. The regular chocolate chip cookies were really rich, with a slightly crunchy outside and a lovely soft inside. The addition of white chocolate chips and coconut sent the cookie into WOW territory for me, and I couldn't keep my mitts off of the dough before they were even baked. These cookies will not last long at all; the only reason they haven't totally disappeared already is because I'm too full to eat them. I'll try again in a few hours! I'm really happy I froze the rest of the dough because now I will have freshly baked

cookies with minimum work.

### ***The Rating***

5/5

These cookies have an excellent flavour and texture. I'm very happy with this recipe and can't wait to eat more.



Posted in [Cookies](#), [Five Star](#)

→ **11 Comments**

Tagged [chewy](#), [chocolate chip](#), [Cookies](#), [delicious](#), [soft](#)

## **Day 30: Coconut Cake**

Posted on [June 30, 2008](#) | [4 Comments](#)





After baking so many cakes, I was kind of running out of ideas at this point. After surveying my baking ingredients cupboard, I noticed that I had a lot of coconut left over. Thus, coconut cake.

This cake travelled by train and tube all the way to a London park for a picnic with friends. It is an annual get together, and one of our group is expecting a baby, so we created a throw-it-together baby shower as well. I didn't make the sugar baby, just in case you were wondering.

Recipe found on Sainsbury's recipe forums, [posted by seth25](#).  
Thanks!

### ***The Recipe***

*4oz butter*

*4oz caster sugar*

*2 large eggs*

*6oz self raising flour*

*2oz desicated coconut*

*Approx 2 tablespoons of milk*

*Cream butter & sugar till soft and pale, beat eggs and add to mixture. Gradually fold in coconut, then flour. Add milk to give soft dropping consistency. Sprinkle top of cake with coconut and caster sugar and bake at Gas mark 3 for 1 to 1 and a quarter hours.*

### ***My Alterations***

I was really tempted to add more coconut to the recipe, just because I wanted to use it up. I didn't, because I was worried about messing up the cake. Normally, I wouldn't mind taking the risk, but this was going to be on public display, so I played it safe.

**The Result**

This cake was very easy to put together and bake. It took a long time, which surprised me, but I just kept a close eye on it.

**The Verdict**

This is a yummy cake! It’s not a strong coconut taste, but it’s very soft and moist. I only managed to eat a small slice, but the others at the picnic seemed to like it.

**The Rating**

5/5

Easy, simple recipe with great results. Can’t go wrong!



Posted in [Easy Baking](#), [English Recipes](#), [Five Star](#), [Special Occasion Baking](#) → **4 Comments**  
Tagged [coconut](#), [easy recipes](#), [simple](#), [tasty](#)

**Oven temperature conversion chart**

Posted on [June 29, 2008](#) | [1 Comment](#)

Centigrade..... Fahrenheit..... Gas Mark

130 .....	250.....	1
150 .....	300 .....	2
170 .....	325 .....	3

180 .....	350 .....	4
190 .....	375 .....	5
200 .....	400 .....	6
220 .....	425 .....	7
230 .....	450 .....	8
240 .....	475 .....	9

Posted in [American Recipes](#), [Baking Tips](#), [English Recipes](#), [Tutorial](#) → **1 Comment**

Tagged [centigrade](#), [celcius](#), [fahrenheit](#), [gas mark](#), [heat conversion](#), [cooking aid](#)

## Tutorial 2: Separating egg yolks from whites the easy way

Posted on [June 29, 2008](#) | [3 Comments](#)

A few years ago, when I watched all those fancy-pants cooking shows, I saw Nigella Lawson separate her egg yolks with an incredibly easy and simple method. If you are at all squeamish about touching the slimy innards of chicken eggs, beware: this may not be the best method for you.

Simply put, you just dump the egg into your hand (over the mixing bowl) and let the egg white dribble through your fingers. I used to pass the yolk from one half of the broken shell to the other, letting the white fall out on its own a little bit at a time, but the yolk would sometimes break on a sharp shell corner and all my hard work was ruined.

Gently holding the egg yolk in your hand, with fingers slightly apart to let the egg white escape, but not enough to drop the yolk, and you have easily and quickly separated the two. No hassle, but unfortunately, a lot of mess.

I don't particularly enjoy the cold slimy egg whites leftover on my hands, but it works so I'll stick with this method for now. The sacrifices I make for my cakes....





Posted in [Tutorial](#)

[→ 3 Comments](#)

Tagged [eggs](#), [Tutorial](#), [unpleasant baking experiences](#)

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